

Thanksgiving Weather

November 25, 2021

Weather Forecast Office
Albuquerque, NM
Issued November 19, 2021 7:13 PM MST





Thanksgiving Weather Review



Late November weather can be extremely volatile over New Mexico as jet stream patterns begin to fluctuate wildly with the approach of the winter season. Tranquil weather with mild temperatures, low humidity, and light winds can deteriorate quickly as powerful storm systems move through the southern Rockies. Record warm temperatures, bright sunny skies, widespread rain, heavy snow, freezing rain, strong winds, record cold temperatures, and dangerous travel conditions have all occurred over the Thanksgiving holiday, sometimes all within the same day! The following slides summarize weather records observed on Thanksgiving Day for several locations across northern and central NM. Dozens of historic weather events that have impacted the region over the Thanksgiving holiday period are also highlighted. Folks are encouraged to always check the latest weather forecast if planning travel to stay safe over the holidays. A winter travel kit will come in handy if you encounter rapidly changing weather conditions. We hope everyone has a safe and happy Thanksgiving holiday while venturing out across our beautiful Land of Enchantment.



Roswell, NM | November 24, 2007
Courtesy Robin Billington



Sandia Mountains, NM | November 24, 2013
Courtesy Todd Shoemake



Socorro, NM | November 28, 2019
Courtesy Janus Zeal via Twitter



Edgewood, NM | November 30, 2006
Courtesy Pat Hitchcock



History of Thanksgiving



On September 28, 1789, just before leaving for recess, the first Federal Congress passed a resolution asking that the President of the United States recommend to the nation a day of thanksgiving. A few days later, President George Washington issued a proclamation naming Thursday, November 26, 1789 as a "Day of Public Thanksgiving" - the first time Thanksgiving was celebrated under the new Constitution. Subsequent presidents issued Thanksgiving Proclamations, but the dates and even months of the celebrations varied. It wasn't until President Abraham Lincoln's 1863 Proclamation that Thanksgiving was regularly commemorated each year on the last Thursday of November.

In 1939, however, the last Thursday in November fell on the last day of the month. Concerned that the shortened Christmas shopping season might dampen the economic recovery, President Franklin D. Roosevelt issued a Presidential Proclamation moving Thanksgiving to the second to last Thursday of November. As a result of the proclamation, 32 states issued similar proclamations while 16 states refused to accept the change and proclaimed Thanksgiving to be the last Thursday in November. For two years two days were celebrated as Thanksgiving - the President and part of the nation celebrated it on the second to last Thursday in November, while the rest of the country celebrated it the following week.

To end the confusion, Congress decided to set a fixed-date for the holiday. On October 6, 1941, the House passed a joint resolution declaring the last Thursday in November to be the legal Thanksgiving Day. The Senate, however, amended the resolution establishing the holiday as the fourth Thursday, which would take into account those years when November has five Thursdays. The House agreed to the amendment, and President Roosevelt signed the resolution on December 26, 1941, thus establishing the fourth Thursday in November as the Federal Thanksgiving Day holiday.¹



¹Congress Establishes Thanksgiving. [Online version, <https://www.archives.gov/legislative/features/thanksgiving>, National Archives and Records Administration, October 28, 2021.]



Thanksgiving Day Records



Location	Warmest Max Temperature	Warmest Min Temperature	Coldest Max Temperature	Coldest Min Temperature	Wettest	Snowiest	Period of Record
Albuquerque*	70° (1909)	49° (2015)	32° (1968)^	7° (1938)^	0.49" (2000)	3.1" (2019)	1892-2020
Clayton*	77° (1896)	43° (2017)	12° (1919)	-1° (1919)	0.28" (2015)	3.5" (1987)	1896-2020
Roswell*	85° (1965)	51° (1926)	29° (1919)	0° (1938)	0.13" (1972)	1.2" (1972)	1894-2020
Farmington*	66° (1949)	38° (2008)	30° (2010)^	1° (1952)	0.61" (1965)	T (1967)^	1941-2020
Gallup*	70° (1998)	34° (2019)^	30° (2010)	-3° (2010)	0.38" (2008)	1.4" (1987)	1973-2020
Santa Fe*	67° (1954)	40° (2015)^	24° (1918)	-2° (1952)	0.95" (2000)	4.7" (2019)	1874-2020
Raton*	70° (2011)^	43° (1970)	15° (1952)	-6° (1952)	0.60" (1997)	5.0" (1997)	1946-2020
Tucumcari*	80° (1960)^	55° (1970)	23° (1952)	4° (1952)	1.05" (2015)	3.0" (2007)^	1905-2020
Socorro	73° (1970)^	51° (1965)	36° (2019)	5° (1938)	0.19" (2008)	1.4" (1996)	1893-2020

Warmest Max Temperature:
Roswell: 85° (11/25/1965)

Coldest Min Temperature:
Eagle Nest: -33° (11/28/1957)

Wettest:
Reserve: 1.28" (11/27/1919)

Warmest Min Temperature:
Bosque del Apache: 58° (11/24/1910)

Coldest Max Temperature:
Eagle Nest: 14° (11/27/1952)

Snowiest:
Chama: 14.5" (11/27/1975)

* records are a combination of ASOS, COOP, and/or nearby historical NCEI data for the NWS Albuquerque forecast area

^ record tied in a previous year but this is the most recent



Historical Weather Events*



- **November 29, 1906:** Eight inches of snow fell at Mountainair on the 30th.
- **November 26, 1908:** A whopping 12" of snow fell at Tucumcari on the 27th.
- **November 28, 1918:** A cold airmass impacted the region on the 29th and 30th. Dulce recorded a low temperature of -18°, Quemado -16°, Red River -11°, Clayton 7°, and Albuquerque 12°.
- **November 27, 1919:** Light snow blanketed much of the region on Thanksgiving Day. The heaviest snow fell in the southwest mountains where Reserve recorded 7". Three to 6" was common within the Rio Grande Valley and the higher terrain of northern and central NM.
- **November 29, 1923:** A significant snowstorm covered northeast NM in heavy snowfall on the 27th and 28th. Abbott recorded an impressive 14" of snow while Clayton and Pasamonte both picked up 8".
- **November 26, 1931:** A bitterly cold airmass and a few inches of snow impacted much of the region from the 24th to the 26th. Aztec recorded 6" of snow, Portales 5", Mountainair 4", Los Alamos and Red River 3", and Albuquerque 1". Low temperatures on the 24th dropped to a bone chilling -37° at Dulce, -23° at Red River, -10° at Quemado, -7° at Aztec, and 5° at Albuquerque.
- **November 21, 1940:** A major snowstorm brought cold temperatures and heavy snow from the 20th to the 23rd. Mosquero reported a whopping 20" of snow on the 23rd and 24th, Cuba 15", Chama 12.5", and Wolf Canyon within the Jemez Mountains picked up 12". Most other locations across central and eastern NM picked up 4 to 8" with this storm, including 5.3" at Albuquerque.
- **November 23, 1944:** It was a wet Thanksgiving as widespread rainfall moved across the region. Glenwood reported a hefty 0.81" of rain, Bingham 0.69", Los Alamos 0.60", Golden 0.53", Albuquerque 0.39", Santa Fe 0.33", and Socorro 0.26". Temperatures were also warm with many areas topping out in the 60s. It was cold enough in the high terrain for 1 to 3" to fall in Chama, Red River, Cerro, and El Morro.
- **November 28, 1946:** Warm temperatures spread across eastern NM. Pasamonte reached 79°, Tucumcari 76°, Conchas Dam 75°, Portales 74°, Clayton 73°, and Las Vegas 70°.
- **November 24, 1949:** Warm temperatures impacted all of NM. The Pecos National Monument reported a high of 80° on the 24th and 25th then 82° on the 26th, establishing their all-time monthly record high for November. Glenwood reached a high of 79°, Elk and Roswell 77°, Tucumcari 76°, Zuni 73°, Ruidoso and Clayton 71°, Socorro, Mountainair, and Mosquero 70°.
- **November 23, 1950:** Warm temperatures occurred again on Thanksgiving 1950. Portales reported a high of 80° on the 22nd and Glenwood hit 78° on the 25th. Many other parts of the state saw highs in the 70s, including 77° at Tucumcari, 76° at Reserve, 73° at Roswell, 72° at Mountainair, and 70° at Conchas Dam.

*Historical weather events are summarized to include days surrounding the Thanksgiving holiday.



Historical Weather Events



- **November 22, 1951:** Warm temperatures occurred for the 3rd year in a row leading up to Thanksgiving Day 1951. Portales reported a sizzling high temperature of 87° on the 21st, Elk 81°, Roswell and Sumner Lake 80°, and Glenwood, Conchas Dam, and San Jon 79°.
- **November 27, 1952:** After three consecutive years of very warm Thanksgiving holidays, a bitterly cold airmass tipped the scales in 1952 with low temperatures falling into the teens to 20s below zero. Dulce recorded a low of -24° on the 26th, Eagle Nest and Red River -22°, Pecos National Monument -19°, Cuba -17°, Ruidoso -11°, Las Vegas and Raton -8°, Santa Fe -2°, Clayton 0°, and Farmington 1°.
- **November 24, 1960:** Warm temperatures occurred over much of eastern NM with widespread mid to upper 70s. Roswell, Bitter Lakes, and Tucumcari all reported a high temperature of 80°, Portales 78°, Elk and Amistad 77°, and Clovis 75°.
- **November 25, 1965:** Widespread moderate to heavy rainfall impacted northern and western NM. High temperatures topped out in the 70s and low 80s over eastern NM. Roswell reported a record high temperature of 85°. Dulce received an impressive 1.20" of rain, Chama 1.06", Glenwood 1.00", Farmington 0.61", Red River 0.55", Jemez Springs 0.35", Chaco Canyon 0.31", and Albuquerque 0.25".
- **November 23, 1972:** Light to moderate snowfall impacted northern and central NM. Fort Sumner, Gran Quivira, and Lake Maloya picked up 6", Elk, Portales, and Socorro 4", Stanley and Golden 2", and around 1" in Albuquerque. Temperatures were also quite cold across the area on the 22nd with lows ranging from -10° at Maxwell to -5° at Chama, 5° at Clayton, and 9° at Santa Fe.
- **November 25, 1976:** A major snowstorm struck the region the day after Thanksgiving on the 26th. Gascon was buried in nearly 26" of snow with nearby Red River and Eagle Nest picking up 12 to 20". Los Alamos picked up 12" of snow. Five to 10" of snow was common over many other parts of northern and western NM. The Albuquerque Sunport reported 2.4". Exceptionally cold temperatures settled into the area after this storm through the 28th. Eagle Nest reported a low temperature of -38° on the 28th, Chaco Canyon -35°, Cuba -30°, Gallup -26°, Luna -25°, Springer -22°, Espanola -21°, Ruidoso -19°, Stanley -18°, Bernalillo -17°, Clayton -10°, and Albuquerque -7°.
- **November 23, 1978:** It was a very wet holiday period with widespread heavy rain and very high terrain snow on the 23rd and 24th. Much of the region reported two-day rainfall amounts between one-half inch and 1" with locally higher amounts near 2". Glenwood reported a record 1.87", Los Alamos 1.77", Cuba 0.90", Las Vegas 0.84", Santa Fe 0.57", Farmington 0.54", Tucumcari 0.45", and Albuquerque 0.30".
- **November 26, 1981:** Warm temperatures occurred the day before Thanksgiving with widespread 70s and 80s over central and eastern NM on the 25th. Bitter Lakes reported a high of 83°, Sumner Lake 80°, Conchas Dam 79°, Glenwood 78°, and Los Lunas 70°.
- **November 25, 1982:** A major snowstorm blanketed east central and southeast NM with moderate to heavy snowfall. Elk reported a whopping 14" of snow while 6 to 12" fell in areas from near Yeso to Fort Sumner, Ragland, Tucumcari, and Ruidoso.



Historical Weather Events



- **November 24, 1983:** A winter storm produced light to moderate snow over all of northern and central NM on the 25th and 26th. Red River received 11" of snow while other locations in the northern mountains picked up 3 to 6". Many other areas picked up at least a dusting to 1". It was also cold with this storm. The low temperature at Chama fell to -9°, Dulce -7°, Ocate -3°, Gallup 4°, and Las Vegas 5°.
- **November 22, 1984:** A mix of rain and snow impacted central and eastern NM on the day after Thanksgiving on the 23rd. Total precipitation amounts ranged from 1.40" at Sumner Lake to 1.22" at Conchas Dam, 0.80" at Cubero, 0.74" at Roswell, 0.49" at Socorro, and 0.30" at Mountainair. Temperatures were cold enough to support snow over northeast NM where 2 to 4" fell from Dilia to Mosquero, Lake Maloya, and Gascon. Las Vegas reported the highest snowfall amount of 7".
- **November 28, 1985:** Another active Thanksgiving period occurred with warm temperatures, widespread moderate to heavy rain, and some mountain snow. Temperatures topped out in the 60s and 70s over much of the area. Rainfall amounts ranged from 0.76" at Glenwood to 0.49" at El Morro, 0.37" at Zuni Pueblo, and 0.21" at Ruidoso. Chama was able to squeeze out 7.5" of snow.
- **November 27, 1986:** Yet another storm system impacted the region with widespread rain and snow for the 5th Thanksgiving in a row. Temperatures were warm enough for rain to fall in most areas while 1 to 2" of snow fell near the Continental Divide. Farmington picked up 0.52" of rain, Alcalde 0.44", Cubero 0.33", Chaco Canyon 0.22", and Navajo Dam 0.20".
- **November 26, 1992:** A cold airmass impacted the region with many locations across northern NM falling below zero. Eagle Nest reported a low of -10°, El Morro -8°, Cuba -6°, Gallup 1°, Ruidoso 2°, Farmington 7°, Socorro and Santa Fe 8°, and Maxwell 9°.
- **November 25, 1993:** Very cold temperatures occurred once again over much of northern and central NM. Chama reported a low of -11°, Raton -7°, Gallup -1°, Chaco Canyon 2°, Ruidoso 5°, Mountainair 6°, Bingham 8°, Farmington 9°, and Los Lunas 10°.
- **November 23, 1995:** Very warm temperatures developed over the Thanksgiving holiday with widespread 70s and 80s. Reserve roasted in record heat with a high 89°, Conchas Dam 81°, Roswell 79°, Socorro 77°, Portales 75°, and Los Lunas 72°.
- **November 28, 1996:** A strong storm system moving through northern NM produced moderate to heavy snow, including thundersnow! Four to 8" of snow was common within the Rio Grande Valley and portions of east central and northeast NM. The northern mountains picked up 10 to 15" of snow. Traffic was snarled in the Albuquerque metro area. Slick travel resulted in the closure of I-40 and I-25.
- **November 27, 1997:** Holiday travel was disrupted over parts of NM as moderate to heavy snow impacted the area. Most higher terrain locations of northern NM picked up between 4 and 8" while lower elevations picked up 1 to 2" of snow with a mix of rain. A very localized band of intense snowfall around Lake Maloya dumped an eye-popping 36" in just 48 hours ending on the 29th. This heavy snow may have been responsible for a train derailment in the vicinity.



Historical Weather Events



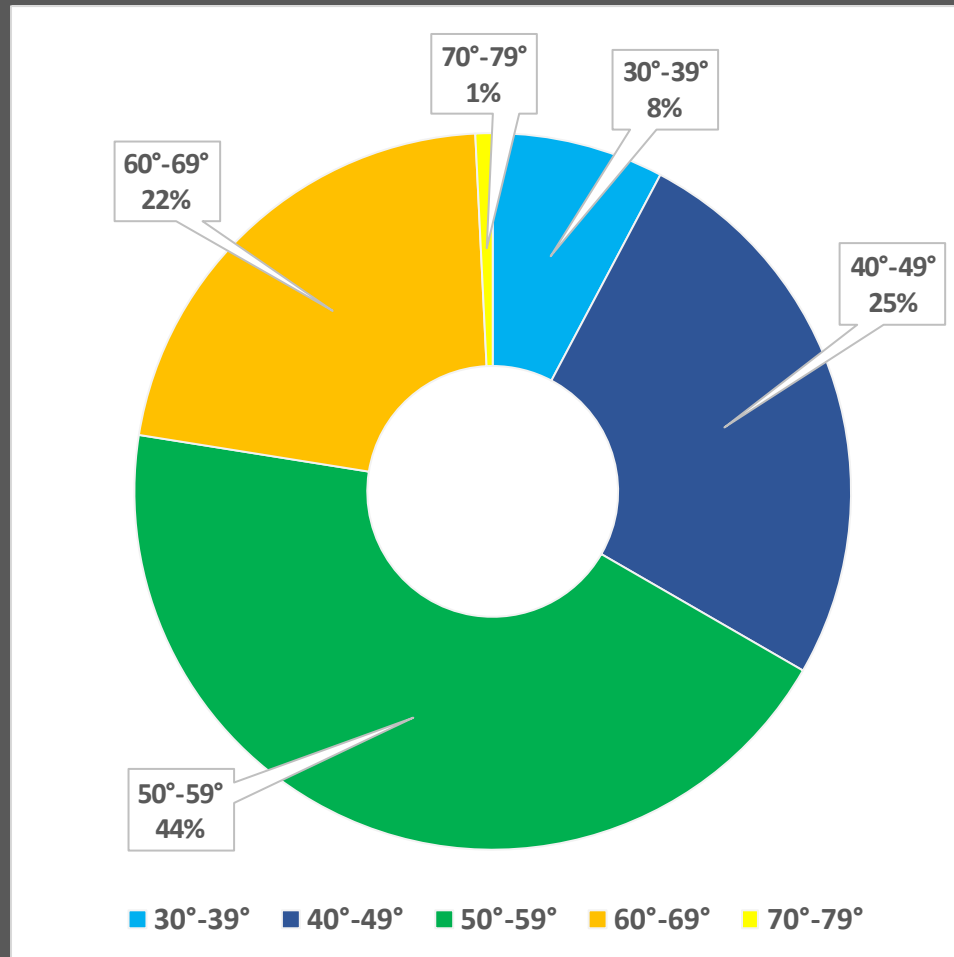
- **November 23, 2000:** A winter storm impacted northern New Mexico with widespread moderate to heavy snowfall in the high terrain. A mix of rain and snow fell at lower elevations. Areas around Los Alamos and Gascon picked up 10 to 15" of snow while 3 to 6" fell in nearby valley locations from El Vado to Abiquiu, Santa Fe, and Moriarty. Cold air in the wake of this system on the 25th dropped low temperatures to -5° at Las Vegas, -2° at Quemado, and 4° at Chama.
- **November 27, 2003:** A cold airmass settled into the region with low temperatures falling into the single digits. Cuba and Raton reported a low temperature of 2° on the 28th, Chama 3°, Quemado and Las Vegas 5°, Mountainair and Elk 7°, Gallup 8°, and Jemez Springs 10°.
- **November 22, 2007:** A winter storm dumped 6 to 12" of snow from the central mountain chain across eastern NM. Red River received 13", Chama 11", Moriarty 7.4", and Roswell a record 10.9"!
- **November 27, 2008:** A wet storm system moving through central NM produced widespread rain and snow across the region. Rainfall amounts of 0.25 to 0.50" were reported within central and western NM. Temperatures were cold enough across the northern mountains to support a moderate snowfall of 4 to 8".
- **November 22, 2012:** A warm airmass over the region allowed temperatures to rise into the mid to upper 70s over eastern NM. Roswell reported a high temperature of 80°, Fort Sumner and Tucumcari 77°, Bosque del Apache and San Jon 75°, and Portales 74°.
- **November 27, 2014:** Warm temperatures impacted eastern NM with high temperatures topping out in the upper 70s to lower 80s. San Jon reported a high of 83°, Fort Sumner and Tucumcari 81°, Raton, Portales, and Clayton 77°, and Elk 75°.
- **November 26, 2015:** A rare freezing rain event with temperatures in the teens over eastern NM resulted in widespread severe impacts to travel along I-40 and U.S. Highways 54, 285, 60/84, and 70/380. Freezing rain totals of 0.25 to 0.50", with localized amounts near 0.75", followed by 1 to 2" of snow, resulted in numerous vehicle accidents over eastern NM. Power lines were downed in Curry County.
- **November 23, 2017:** Very warm conditions impacted the region over Thanksgiving with widespread temperatures in the 70s and 80s. Roswell, Sumner Lake and Tucumcari topped out at 84°, Portales 81°, Clayton 80°, Gallup, Los Lunas, and Las Vegas 74°, and Cochiti 72°.
- **November 22, 2018:** A storm system racing through NM produced strong northwest wind gusts of 50 to 60 mph along the east slopes of the central mountain chain.
- **November 28, 2019:** (November 27-29) A major snowstorm blanketed much of northern, central, and eastern NM with 4 to 8" of snowfall. Strong winds following this storm system produced wind gusts of 60 to 70 mph across much of the southern high terrain and parts of southeast NM. The 3.1" of snow at the Albuquerque Sunport set a new record for the snowiest Thanksgiving.



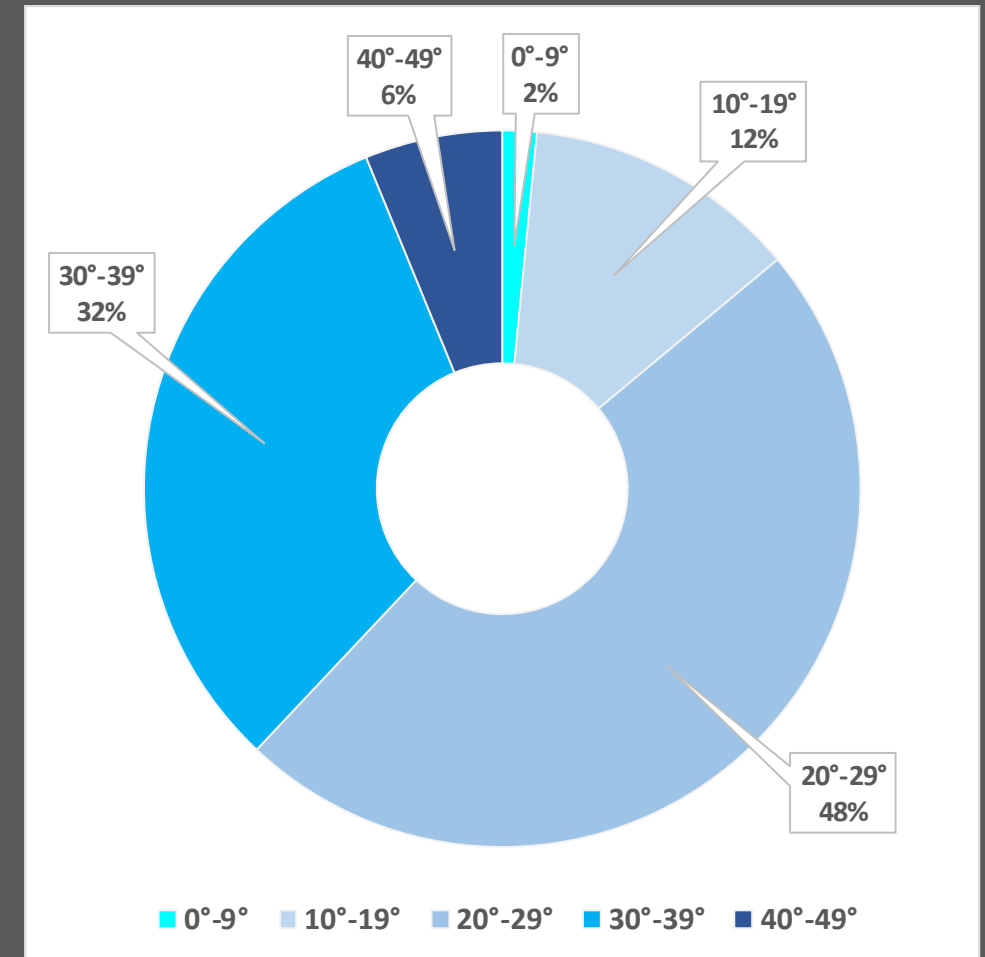
Temperature Distributions



The pie charts below show the percent distribution of maximum and minimum temperatures at the Albuquerque Sunport on Thanksgiving Day for each range listed (1931-2020). High temperatures in the 40s and 50s occur 69% of the time while low temperatures in the 20s and 30s occur 80% of the time. The high temperature has only hit 70° once. Low temperatures below 10° are extremely rare.



Maximum Temperatures



Minimum Temperatures



Rain and Snow



Precipitation is rare on any given day in Albuquerque given our predominantly arid southwest climate. Measurable rain and snow have only occurred on a handful of Thanksgiving days with a few other days picking up just trace amounts. The table below highlights the years when rain and/or snow fell at the Albuquerque Sunport (1931-2020). It is worth noting that precipitation can vary greatly across the metro area and there may be days when no rain and/or snow was recorded at the Sunport but other parts of town picked up precipitation, and vice-versa. The 3.1” of snow on Thanksgiving Day 2019 set a new record for the snowiest Thanksgiving in Albuquerque dating back to 1931.

Albuquerque Sunport	Precipitation	Snowfall
November 26, 1931	0.06”	1.0”
November 30, 1933	0.29”	--
November 28-29, 1934	0.13”	1.5”
November 25, 1943	0.04”	--
November 24, 1944	0.06”	--
November 27, 1958	0.03”	--
November 25, 1965	0.25”	--
November 24, 1972	0.03”	Trace
November 27, 1997	0.06”	Trace

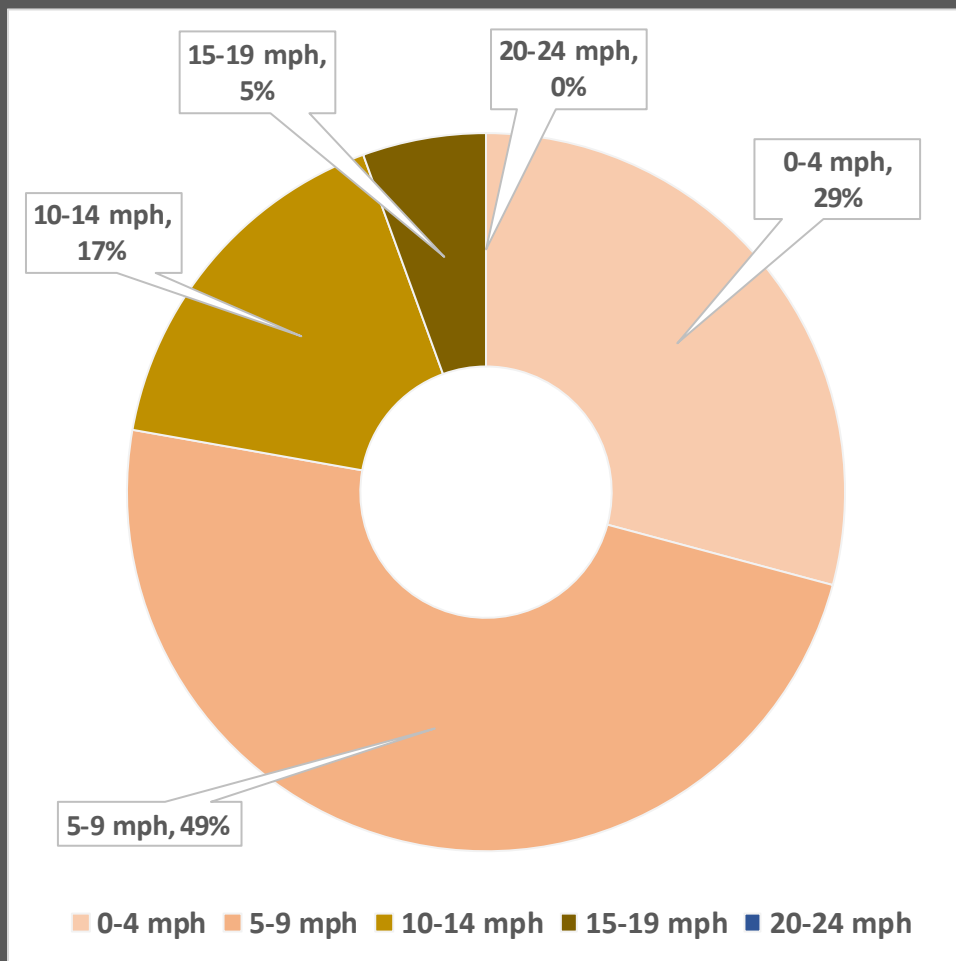
Albuquerque Sunport	Precipitation	Snowfall
November 24, 2000	0.49”	Trace
November 22, 2007	0.06”	0.5”
November 28, 2008	0.21”	Trace
November 25, 2010	0.02”	0.3”
November 28, 2019	0.30”	3.1”



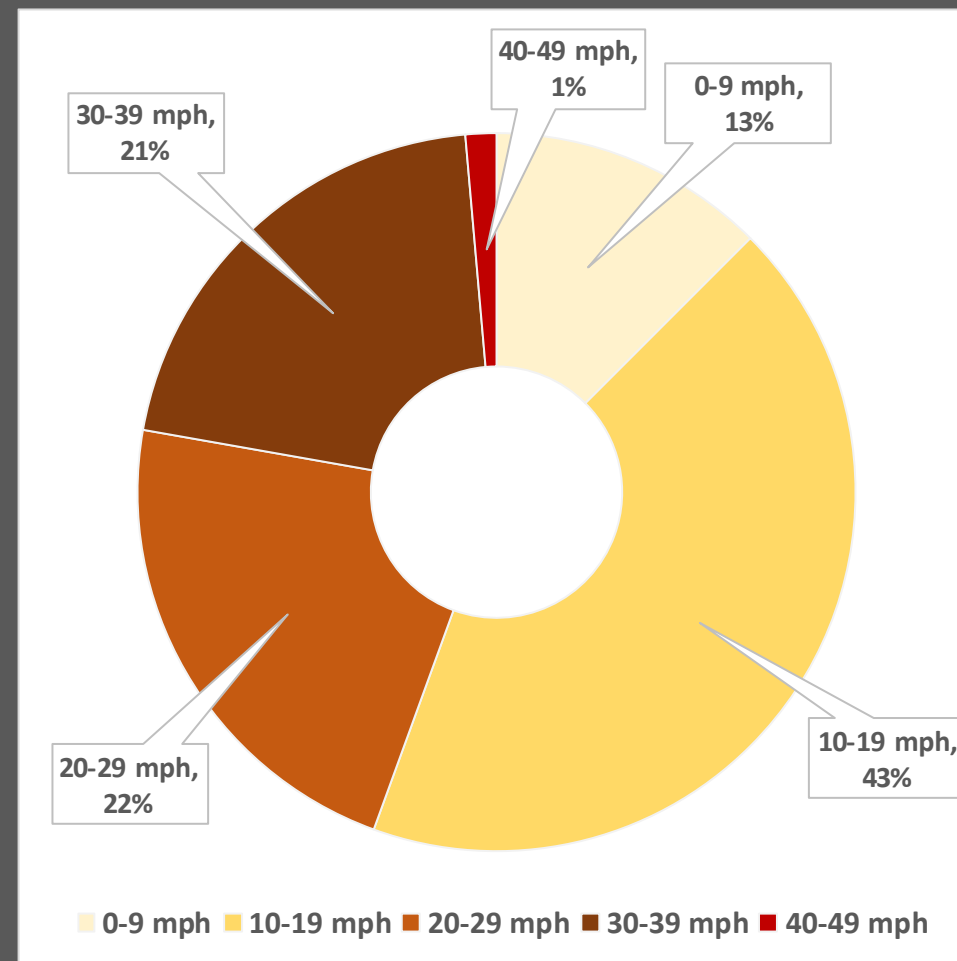
Wind Distribution



The pie charts below show the percent distribution of average wind speed and peak wind gust at the Albuquerque Sunport on Thanksgiving Day for each range listed (1949-2020). Average wind speeds less than 10 mph occur 78% of the time while peak wind gusts less than 30 mph also occur 78% of the time. The peak wind gust on Thanksgiving Day was 47 mph on November 27, 1958.



Average Wind Speed



Peak Wind Gust